

NEWS RELEASE



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Thinking About Summer Camping? Get Ready Now

California State Parks Selected Among America's "Top 100 Family Campgrounds"

***Also gains honors for activities like fishing, hiking, biking, bird watching and education
and historical facilities***

California State Parks has once again gained recognition with ten destinations included as one of the top 100 family campgrounds in the U.S., as well as earning honors for its biking trails, bird-watching, canoeing, fishing and romantic spots and other categories,

"This tells the world something that our millions of visitors have known for years. And that is that State Parks has an amazingly diverse and spectacular system," said California State Park Director Ruth Coleman. "We are delighted that ReserveAmerica has given us this recognition."

The recognition was announced by ReserveAmerica, the reservation service for California State Parks and other parks in the U.S. in its third annual "Top 100 Family Campground Awards."

The list was developed in part by park rangers, regional park management and campers who wrote testimonials, rated campgrounds and provided feedback throughout the year. Nearly 3,000 parks were reviewed and the final 100 campgrounds were chosen based on specific family friendly criteria ranging from educational programs and visitor centers to camping amenities and overall beauty and scenery. Visitors can learn more by visiting www.reserveamerica.com.

The *Top 100 Family Campgrounds* were selected based on criteria requested by family campers including park amenities, stunning outdoor scenery, and educational facilities. The quality and availability of hot showers, laundry facilities, hiking trails, family beaches, radio-free zones, visitor centers, educational programs, children's events and location were also considered.

California State Parks' 2005 Top 100 Family Campgrounds are:

- Big Basin Redwoods State Park
- Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park
- Humboldt Redwoods State Park

- MacKerricher State Park
- Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park
- Mount Diablo State Park
- Patrick's Point State Park
- Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park
- Salt Point State Park

California State Parks was also recognized in the following categories:

Top 5 Amazing Locations: Providence Mountains State Recreation Area; **Top 5 Biking Trails:** Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park; **Top 5 Bird-Watching Spots:** Brannan Island State Recreation Area; **Top 5 Canoeing Spots:** Humboldt Redwoods State Park; **Top 5 Educational/Historical Facilities:** Big Basin State Park; **Top 10 Fishing Spots:** Clear Lake State Park; **Top 5 Hiking Trails:** Salt Point State Park; **Top 5 Kid-Friendly Parks:** California State Railroad Museum; **Top 5 Park Beaches:** MacKerricher State Park; **Top 5 Picnic Areas:** Patrick's Point State Park; **Top 5 Romantic Spots:** Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park; and **Top 10 Scenic Views:** Mount Diablo State Park.

With summer fast approaching, State Park officials offered some tips to make the most of your summer camping plans at California State Parks:

- Determine where you want to camp and be flexible: Have alternate parks in mind in case your first choice is booked. Check the State Park website at www.parks.ca.gov for more information.
- For reservation sites, plan ahead: Reservations can be made up to seven months in advance through ReserveAmerica at 800-444-7275, or online at www.parks.ca.gov
- Consider non-reservation sites: If reservation sites are full, look for first-come, first-served campgrounds. And, try to arrive on a Tuesday or Wednesday to maximize your vacation during the “off-season” months of April and May, or after Labor Day.
- Consider less busy days: Sometimes reservations are easier to make if you can camp mid-week.
- Consider less popular camps: Southern coastal campgrounds can be full year-round. Visitors may have better luck getting reservations at State Parks north of Santa Cruz or inland. Visitors should look for sites that are more remote, and away from major metropolitan areas.
- Remember the holiday crush: The closer you try to make reservations to a holiday (Memorial Day weekend, Fourth of July, or Labor Day weekend), the further north and inland you may need to go.
- Consider cancellations: Check the ReserveAmerica website or call 800-444-7275. While no waiting lists are maintained, cancellations are rare but they can occur.

- If the campgrounds you want to visit are booked, consider visiting the park for the day for a picnic, hike or other outdoor recreation.

ReserveAmerica managed more than 25 million reservations from 1984 to 2004, with 3.5 million reservations processed by ReserveAmerica in 2003. Roughly 485 million dollars in recreation use fees have been processed and delivered to ReserveAmerica's State and Federal agency partners during the past 20 years of industry leadership. ReserveAmerica led the camping industry to the Internet by processing America's first online camping reservation in September 1997.

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